



2004
Annual Report
Cobb County Government

Cobb County - 2004 National & State Honors

AAA - General Obligation Bond and Water System Revenue Bond Rating, Moody's

AAA - General Obligation Bond and Water System Revenue Bond Rating, Standard and Poor's

AAA - General Obligation Bond and Water System Revenue Bond Rating, Fitch ICBA

2004 Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

- Government Finance Officers Association

County Manager David Hankerson, Top County Appointed Official Excellence
in Public Service Award - Carl Vinson Institute of Government

Public Safety, Community Policing Award (Homeland Security Category)

- International Association Chiefs of Police and ITT Night Vision

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Department of the Year - United States Tennis Association-Georgia

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Aquatic Section, Innovative Program Award

- Georgia Recreation and Parks Association

Sheriff's Office Reserve Deputy Don Grant 2004 Meritorious Service Award - Georgia Sheriff's Association

Water Quality Laboratory, Outstanding Accomplishments in Laboratory Operation

- Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association

R.L. Sutton WRF, Platinum Award for Complete and Consistent NPDES Permit Compliance
for five consecutive years - Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association

Extension Service Director Patricia Simmons Stuckey and Program Assistant Rosalind Swainson,
Outstanding Communicator Award for Radio - Georgia Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

Harrison Tennis Center, 2004 Outstanding Facility Award - United States Tennis Association

Fire and Emergency Services Chief Becky Denlinger, "President's Award"

- Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs and the Georgia State Firefighter's Association

Police Department, "American Patriot Award" - National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

Senior Services, Innovative program of the year award - Georgia Recreation & Parks Association

continued in back



From the Chairman

Sam Olens
Chairman

Quality of life is a priority in Cobb County.

We create real impact when we invest in maintenance and infrastructure throughout the county. You can see the results when you walk the hallways of your government service centers. You can feel the results when you drive on our roads. You can hear the results through the joyful laughter of children at our county parks.

We continue to maintain our infrastructure using conservative fiscal policies during difficult economic times, and major projects reflect our commitment to our residents' quality of life. This past year, we leased approximately 1,450 acres from the Army Corps of Engineers at no charge so the land can be used as a

passive park. We opened the Jean and Elwood Wright Environmental Education Center in east Cobb to help educate children on the importance of the environment. We broke ground on the \$3.7 million South Cobb Regional Library, are constructing a \$3 million South Cobb Aquatic Center and secured several properties for greenspace.



Redevelopment removes problems and presents new solutions. We purchased an older shopping center to renovate and use as offices. We are also encouraging smart developments that allow residents to live, work and play in the same area, thus curtailing many problems normally associated with growth.

It's through the work of our employees and support of our residents that Cobb County continues its tradition of excellence.

Sam S. Olens

District Commissioners



District 1 continues to be a very desirable location to reside. So much so, that seven out of nine schools slated for the county will be located in northwest Cobb County. This tremendous growth must be balanced with appropriate greenspace and natural resource preservation, adequate recreation facilities and additional transportation improvements. The Board of Commissioners, the development community and local residents must ensure that a balance is maintained, that benefits far outweigh the burdens of growth and that quality of life is enriched.

Helen Goreham, *Commissioner, District 1*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen C. Goreham".



A lot of good things have happened in District 2 in 2004 and will continue into 2005. The 9.5-mile, 18-foot diameter sewer tunnel was completed, \$65 million dollars was committed to remodel Cumberland Mall, more than \$900 million dollars has been approved and committed for quality growth developments in the CID area and additional greenspace was acquired along the Chattahoochee River Corridor. The Jean and Elwood Wright Environmental Education Center was opened in east Cobb and the Trolleyline Park was completed in the Vinings area.

Joe Lee Thompson, *Commissioner, District 2*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe L. Thompson".

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This past year has been very exciting for District 3 in northeast Cobb. We have seen the Canton Road Corridor Redevelopment program take formative shape and we expect that the final plan will be presented the first quarter of 2005. We have also taken positive and effective steps to strengthen code enforcement efforts. 2004 also saw the Town Center Area Community Improvement District adopt its long-range Master Plan and Livable Center Initiative application to ensure that future development within the Town Center area utilizes the strengths of the live-work-play platform for "smart growth."

Tim Lee, *Commissioner, District 3*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Timothy D. Lee".



I am privileged to have served District 4, which is starting to see the fruition of hard work by its community leaders and residents. We broke ground this past year on the \$3.7 million South Cobb Regional Library and the \$3 million South Cobb Aquatic Center. We obtained \$1 million in state funds for a bridge for the Silver Comet Trail over C.H. James Parkway, a tremendous safety enhancement for residents. The rediscovery of this area by people and the development community bodes well for a bright future. Thank you for allowing me to be your commissioner for the past eight years.

G. Woody Thompson, Jr., *Commissioner, District 4*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "G. Woody Thompson, Jr.".

Economy

Staying sharp

■ Businesses find a welcoming home in Cobb County. Federal Express broke ground on an \$80 million regional package handling facility, which will allow the company to meet the needs of its growing client base in the southeast.

■ Georgian Bank has reaffirmed its commitment to Cobb County by starting construction on a new \$15 million corporate headquarters that will be located in the Cumberland Galleria area.

■ Nissan North America Inc. has relocated its southeastern regional sales office comprised of approximately 70 high-level executives and managers from Florida to the Vinings area.

■ As a result of hiring and capital expenditure freezes, Cobb County saw more than \$27 million in surplus funds for Fiscal Year 2003. The money was

then freed to be used on pending maintenance and capital improvement projects, such as the South Cobb Regional Library and the 800 MHz communications system for Public Safety.

■ The grants development specialist position we created played a pivotal role in securing approximately \$4.3 million in new grants revenue this past year. Most of these grant dollars are for Homeland Security and clearly illustrate the county's continued commitment to public safety.



■ The nation's top three credit rating agencies, Moody's, Standard and Poor's and Fitch IBCA, each gave Cobb County "Triple A" ratings for its general obligation bonds for the eighth year in a row.

■ Redevelopment and revitalization of some of our older commercial corridors will continue to be an

Cobb County Government

important focus of our economic development efforts in unincorporated Cobb and its municipalities. We worked cooperatively with the cities of Acworth, Marietta, and Smyrna to establish Tax Allocation Districts (TADs) which provide the financial basis necessary for redevelopment.

- Our Board of Commissioners is serious enough about redevelopment to set the example. In November, we completed the \$2.8 million purchase of a vacant 54,430-square-foot shopping center on Whitlock Avenue. The center will be renovated and used as needed government office space.
- A well-trained, educated labor force continues to be a key element to our successes. CobbWorks, our premiere job training program, continues to be the model throughout Georgia. This past year, CobbWorks oriented more than 1,300 persons to the Workforce Investment Act and other options. CobbWorks also awarded 162 individual training accounts, served 403 youth in program activities, and provided workshops for 843 customers.

Sample Cobb Property Tax Bill

Homestead Exemptions:
\$10,000 County BOC / \$10,000 Schools / \$2,000 State

Based on residential home with market value of \$180,000

County Schools (BOE)	\$1242.80
Maintenance & Operations	\$1,178.00
School Bond	\$64.80
County Government (BOC)	\$631.34
General Fund	\$424.70
Fire District	\$190.80
Debt Service	\$15.84
State Government	\$17.50
TOTAL	\$1,891.64

Up to \$230.00 Governor's Homestead Credit (automatic)

(BOE) 66%	\$1242.80
(BOC) 33%	\$631.34
(State) 1%	\$17.50
TOTAL	\$1,891.64

Other exemptions include BOC Floating Homestead Exemption & BOE Exemption for homeowners over 62

Services

Providing for needs

■ Our Senior Services launched Share the Care, a new voucher program for caregivers of Alzheimer's and other dementia-related disorders. A total of 128 new clients received vital relief during the year, with more than \$48,000 in services provided through special grants.

■ Thanks to a generous community spirit, Senior Services collected more than \$47,000 through special fundraisers to update its Meals on Wheels program. Remodeling included an updated kitchen with a state-of-the-art convection oven and the purchase of a new van for deliveries.

■ We broke ground on the future 20,000 sq. ft. South Cobb Regional Library, which will be built at the corner of Old Floyd and Clay Roads. The \$3.7 million building is scheduled to open in early 2006 and will set the design standard for the Historic Mableton Redevelopment District.

■ To raise funds for the enhancement of library programs and services, the Cobb County Public Library Foundation, Inc. began its work as a separate non-profit charitable organization in partnership with Cobb County Government.

■ Many library improvement projects were coordinated, and in most cases the work actually done, by our Property Management staff, reducing costs to taxpayers. For instance, the Powder Springs Branch Library was completely re-painted and re-carpeted and received a new circulation desk and some new shelving for \$36,500 in state grant funds.

■ The Hattie Wilson Branch Library also received new carpet and paint in September, as well as new light fixtures and air conditioners, for just \$15,500.

■ Library usage continues to be very high.



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June was the busiest month ever, with 376,329 books and audiovisual materials checked out. At the end of September, there were more than a quarter million library card holders (up 10 percent from the previous year) and more than 1 million books and audiovisual items in our collection.

■ We held our annual Vacation Reading Program in the summer. The 9,673 children who signed up for the program read (or had read to them) 128,314 books. A \$9,350 federal grant paid for regional puppet shows, storytellers for the end-of-summer party and children's books for the libraries.



■ During October, our public library system held its most successful used book sale to date, raising more than \$31,000 for the purchase of new materials. The book sale in March was similarly successful, raising more than \$28,300. A sale of donated

comic books raised \$6,029.

■ A seminar jointly sponsored by the Cobb County Board of Commissioners and Board of Education provided opportunities for business owners and operators to gain insights on how to access business opportunities with the county and school system.

■ The Board of Commissioners amended county ordinances and procedures, adjusting competitive bidding thresholds to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the bidding process without reducing competition.

■ We made more than \$150,000 in upgrades to service equipment in Fleet Management. New equipment lifts, lubrication reels, alignment and emission equipment enhanced the maintenance we provide to our departments such as police and fire.

Services

A helping hand

- New high volume copy machines in the Cobb County Print Shop enable us to receive large volume printing jobs directly through the Internet, providing a faster turnaround for projects on behalf of the public.

- A total of 2,880 Cobb County children participated in our county 4-H program and the state 4-H Environmental Education program. 4-H Clubs are led by our Extension Service staff.

- The Master Gardener Program volunteer training provided Cobb County citizens with unbiased research-based information through more than 24,000 contacts and 14,279 volunteer hours this past year. It translated into a value of \$236,175 for the county.

- Extension horticulture worked with the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Clean Water Cam-

paign to provide educational programs to help protect natural resources and enhance landscapes. Topics included pest management, composting and water wise landscaping.

- TV23, our government access channel, updated its equipment with all-digital playback, thereby improving the reliability of its signal and allowing more efficiency in programming. Updated camera systems now allow us to cover more community events for broadcast in the program Spotlight on Cobb.



- Our Communications Office began sending the weekly E-nouncement, which delivers free news and information about Cobb County happenings straight to your computer. You can sign up for it at cobbcounty.org.

- Cobb County's matching grant program allo-

Cobb County Government

cated a total of \$150,000 in matching funds to 13 organizations. The program allowed volunteer organizations to match their money with county funds to make improvements to county parks.

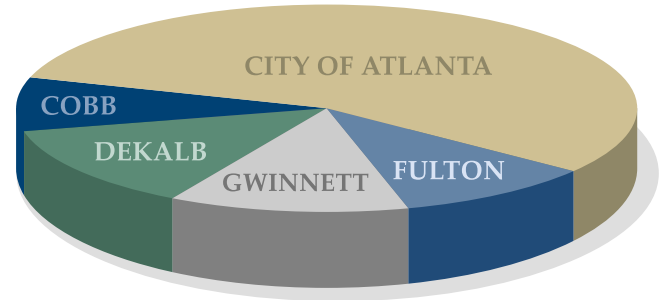
■ More than 1,600 people attended Money Counts, an investment education seminar at the Cobb Galleria Center. It was a collaborative effort of Cobb Extension Service Family and Consumer Sciences Department with the Secretary of State's Office to help people make wise financial decisions and protect them from investment fraud.

Total Unincorporated Tax Millages

KEY	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04
Atlanta	21.72	20.71	23.67	22.83	21.67
Fulton	18.45	18.04	17.28	16.63	16.38
DeKalb	14.68	15.03	15.58	15.58	15.48
Gwinnett	11.99	11.49	11.32	11.50	11.47
COBB	9.84	9.72	9.72	9.72	9.72

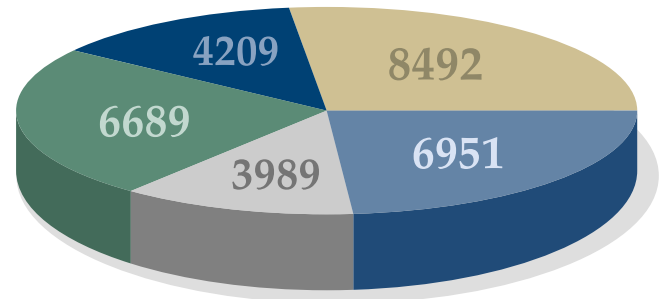
Figures are without school & state taxes
(based on Financial Year)

Total Operating & Capital Budgets



COBB COUNTY	\$ 636,718,311
Fulton County	\$ 998,039,181
DeKalb County	\$ 1,298,095,786
Gwinnett County	\$ 1,403,296,397
City of Atlanta	\$ 5,066,364,347

Full-time Government Employees



Cobb County figures = FY 05, other jurisdictions = FY 04

Public Safety

A stout shield

■ We purchased the PRISim judgmental shooting system for the Department of Public Safety Training Center to provide practical hands-on training for officers dealing with use-of-force incidents. Using an interactive video display, officers are engaged in a variety of high-stress scenarios and must make decisions based on what they observe.

■ A total of 45 specialized training classes, some with internationally known instructors, were hosted at the Department of Public Safety Training Center this past year. This saved Cobb County approximately \$175,000 in expenses and travel.

■ The Department of Public Safety Intelligence Unit joined a cooperative intelligence sharing agreement with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in which Cobb County will receive up to \$250,000 in intelligence equipment and training programs.

■ The Department of Public Safety hosted four Homeland Security conferences this year. These one-day conferences were held in each area of the county and were designed to provide community leaders the necessary training to make their business, house of worship, or school a safer and more prepared location.

■ We also held Homeland Security Open Houses throughout the county where citizens could view Department of Public Safety equipment, interact with personnel, and obtain safety information.

■ Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services joined an alliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), as well as other government and private entities, to foster a safer workplace and reduce the hazards associated with trench/excavation and cave-ins.



Cobb County Government

■ Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services received a \$20,000 grant from Fireman's Fund Insurance Company to purchase lithium battery smoke detectors. With these detectors, we can expand the department's existing detector program, providing these units free of charge to the elderly, low-income families, homes with young children, disabled residents and other households considered at higher risk for fires.

■ We entered into an agreement with the Georgia Search and Rescue Task Force-Metro. As a member of this task force, the department received urban search and rescue equipment — valued at nearly \$500,000 — to be used in the event of an incident involving weapons of mass destruction. This equipment will be allocated to the department by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA), and is being purchased with federal Homeland Security grant funds.



■ The Department of Public Safety continues to receive grant funds through numerous sources to lessen the impact to the county budget and to strengthen existing programs. In the past year, approximately \$4.8 million in grant funds were awarded for equipment, training, and programs.

■ We purchased a new 39-foot Citizen's Fire and All-Hazards Safety and Preparedness Trailer. This \$50,000 vehicle will be used in the department's public education efforts in schools and neighborhood and civic associations, teaching participants about fire safety and how to react to emergencies such as tornadoes, hurricanes and fires. It was partially funded with federal grants awarded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and United States Firefighters' Association.

■ Federal Homeland Security grant funds allowed us to purchase a \$360,000 Emergency Medical

Public Safety

Protecting the community

Operations Vehicle. This 39-foot vehicle can function as a mobile emergency room. It can be used for medical monitoring and treatment of patients and responders during mass casualty incidents and special operations, as well as for transporting patients with infectious diseases.

■ We are upgrading the 800 MHz voice and data radio system, Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD), Police Records Management System (RMS), message switch and mobile data software. A Smartzone interoperability switch to help other jurisdictions communicate with our radio system was purchased with Homeland Security grant funds. These upgrades will provide seamless communications with other agency first responders and will expand the radio system coverage by adding two additional repeater sites where population growth has required consistent public safety service.



■ We received Homeland Security grant funds for the \$66,240 purchase of two portable, self-supporting jump kit repeaters to help provide communications capability during disaster or terrorist situations.

■ A Homeland Security grant funded the \$2,600,000 purchase of International Talk-Around repeaters (ITAC), which will be configured with two adjoining agencies, Fulton and MARTA, to provide a regional communications network. This network will provide enhanced communications to the dispatch, field units and emergency management officials, enabling them to effectively talk to each other during large scale, multi jurisdictional incidents.

■ We purchased a new \$3,200,000 Computer Aided Dispatch to increase the dispatcher's ability to locate callers and the dispatched location of first responders. Using an Advanced Technical Mapping

Cobb County Government

System, 911 dispatchers will be able to provide emergency responders with the shortest route to the location and help pinpoint the location of cellular phone calls.

■ We now have a software triage system to assist 911 operators during the assessment of medical situations. This \$200,000 software helps 911 dispatch an appropriate unit response of fire, police, and EMS.

■ Our Police Department added four evidence technicians. The positions allowed the Evidence Unit to go to a seven-day-a-week operation, allowing for a more efficient and secure processing of property and evidence. Personnel cost for the new positions was \$175,088. The new property and evidence lockers were installed at each of the five police precincts at a total cost of \$12,000.



■ We created a Crime Data Analysis Unit with two officers assigned the task of retrieving and analyzing data, then determining appropriate countermeasures to take in relation to the crime trends. The unit provides a monthly crime analysis report designed to assist precinct and unit commanders with analyzing

crime problems in specific areas.

■ The Police Department added one sergeant to each watch at each precinct. Increased call volume, along with the constant need to respond to administrative and personnel issues, necessitated the additional

sergeant. With the reclassification of some current positions, the sergeants came at no additional personnel costs to the department. Associated costs for uniforms and equipment totaled \$7,000.

■ The Police Department completed the development of the "TracS" system for the collection and

Public Safety

Hearing the call

analysis of traffic crash data. The system will allow the department to collect data showing the location, time and causal factors surrounding traffic crash incidents. The TracS project was accomplished without any expense as the initial software and manpower for the development were provided at no cost to the department.

■ Cobb County Police completed a successful practice assessment in pursuit of national accreditation through the Commission on the Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The assessment revealed only a few areas of operation that require modification in preparation for the final on-site assessment scheduled for January 2005.

■ We purchased new body armor to replace the current issue for 397 officers at a cost of \$89,444. The new armor is lighter and more comfortable for

the officers. The remainder of the body armor will be replaced from the Fiscal Year 2005 budget.

■ Police riot gear for the G-8 Conference was purchased for 50 officers in the amount of \$45,000

as Cobb Police provided officers and equipment for the event in Savannah, Georgia. The equipment will now be used for the protection of Cobb's officers and citizens.

■ The Homeland Security Office of Domestic Preparedness awarded two grants to the Police Department this year so it can enhance its response to critical incidents. These funds will provide a new \$923,000 bomb truck, which includes associ-

ated equipment. This will give the department a second vehicle to respond to hazardous device incidents. In addition, we acquired \$119,000 for a new crisis negotiations van.



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■ The Cobb Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) was restructured to report directly to the County Manager's Office to make both emergency management and Homeland Security efforts more effective. The Sheriff's Office was also given greater responsibility in Cobb's Homeland Security; Sheriff Neil Warren will serve alongside Director G.M. Lloyd as co-chair and adviser to the county manager. The simplified command structure brings a variety of resources and personnel together to protect the people of Cobb County.

■ Upgrades and improvements in critical technology occurred at the Emergency Operations Center this past year, including the implementation of an Internet-based emergency management program with laptops to be used at the facility. These technology enhancements will benefit the public on a daily

basis, but particularly during man-made or natural disasters.



■ The Citizen Corps Advisory Council started its first full year of working with the Cobb Emergency Management Agency (CEMA). Through CEMA and the Advisory Council's efforts, approximately 150 community volunteers were trained in the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program during the past year.

■ The ongoing CERT program teaches private citizens the basic skills needed to help during emergencies, particularly major disasters where professional responders are overwhelmed and cannot get to every area immediately. The free classes include fire safety, first aid, preparedness, teamwork and search techniques.

Judicial Services

■ Our Juvenile Court installed digital recording equipment in each of its four courtrooms, allowing an audio and video CD recording of each proceeding for the official record. The CDs will be permanently archived for future reference.

■ The State Court Clerk's Office, working with and funded by Information Services, implemented the first phase of an Interactive Voice Response System (IVR). This IVR system allows individuals to access criminal and traffic case information via telephone. Future phases will allow for fine payments to be made through the IVR system.

■ In January, Sheriff Neil Warren became the 42nd Sheriff of Cobb County when Sheriff Bill Hutson retired after 27 years.

■ The Sheriff's Office installed a 3D facial



Protection under the law

recognition system at the Adult Detention Center to provide a means of identifying inmates coming into custody. The system uses bio-metric technology to ensure that inmates do not exchange credentials or identities to secure an improper release.

■ The jail also added a new digital video recording and monitoring system to the booking and release areas. This system helps monitor these areas to better manage the inmates processed in and out of the facility each day.

■ As part of a federal technology grant, the Sheriff's Office is working with a local company to prototype a 3D identification card for screening access into the courthouse complex. The cards will contain 3D images as well as various color and image shifting features to deter fraudulent duplication. A second pending grant will expand this technology to assist residents in confirming the identity of

Cobb County Government

law enforcement officials.

■ The coming year promises improvements as the records and jail management computer systems are replaced. One component will be a new automated victim notification system to alert victims when offenders are released from custody. The work release program which opened in 2003, will pilot the use of a GPS Tracking System to monitor inmates at their regular jobs during the day.

■ The State Legislature added one additional judge to the Cobb County State Court this past year. The court now consists of seven Division I judges and four Division II judges making it Cobb County's largest court in the number of full-time judges.

■ In May, the Solicitor General's Office underwent a major renovation to create space for additional staff members. Legislative action added a judgeship to the

Cobb State Court System. With this new courtroom, the Solicitor's Office acquired five new staff members: two prosecutors, a legal administrative specialist, a victim advocate and investigator.



■ We created space by combining the Cobb County Bar Association's Conference Room located in the basement of the State Court Building with an existing conference room, relocating the Investigative Division of the Solicitor General's Office into the vacated space and using the space previously occupied by investigators to build four new offices. We also did renovations to better use the space occupied by the Victim Witness Notification Team.

■ Preparations are now underway to accommodate an addition to Division II of the Cobb State Court System, which will require another courtroom to be added to the State Court Building.

Transportation

Road to progress

- We are completing a three-year program that has retimed all the traffic signal systems in Cobb County resulting in improved travel times and reduced vehicle delays.

- We have designs underway on six projects estimated at \$38 million that will improve the flow of traffic and provide for improved pedestrian and vehicle safety.

- The projects include replacing and widening the Atlanta Road Bridge over the Chattahoochee River, widening Roswell Road from the SR120 Loop to Bridgegate Drive, improvements at the Roswell Road at SR120 Loop Interchange, safety and operational improvements at intersections along Mars Hill Road, safety improvements at intersections on Austell Road, and assistance with widening Abernathy Road/Johnson Ferry Road from Chattahoochee River to Roswell Road.



- Traffic congestion and safety concerns have been addressed at several school zones including: Kell High, Lindley Middle, Pitner Elementary, Bullard Elementary, Still Elementary, Cooper Middle, Sope Creek Elementary, Kemp Elementary, Palmer Middle and Harmony Leland Elementary Schools.

- We coordinated with the Atlanta Regional Commission and federal and state agencies to produce Mobility 2030, the long-range plan for the Atlanta region, containing more than \$50 billion in transportation investments. During this process we developed applications which secured \$3.2 billion of federal grants that will finance many Cobb County transportation projects including roadway, transit, trails, sidewalks and planning projects during the next 25 years.

- Cobb Community Transit reached a new record for ridership with a 10.5 percent increase over Fiscal

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Year 2003, exceeding 3.5 million trips. Replacing 20 buses with larger modern low-floor design buses improved reliability and made traveling on CCT more comfortable.

■ Based on recommendations from the 2003 Transit Development Plan, CCT added 58 hours of additional service per weekday to improve reliability, reduce the waiting time between buses, and expand hours of service. The waiting time between buses on Route 10 was reduced from 30 minutes to 15, from an hour to a half-hour on Route 30, and the evening hours on Route 40 were expanded to accommodate students attending evening classes at KSU.

■ Because of these service improvements, Fiscal Year 2004 ridership for CCT increased 28 percent on Route 30, 14 percent on Route 40 and 10 percent on Route 10.

■ CCT opened a fourth park and ride lot in Acworth. The addition of this park and ride lot provides the public with another location in which to park their cars and commute to downtown, helping to reduce highway congestion and improve air quality.



■ A new ticket kiosk was constructed at the Marietta Transfer Center. This project incorporates a ticket kiosk with the main transfer center for CCT buses and provides people with a convenient location to purchase bus passes and obtain information.

■ In a continuing effort to improve safety and services at the airport, construction began on the 950 feet of runway extension which will upgrade the runway safety overruns to FAA standards. In order to provide quicker and better service to pilots receiving flight plan clearances, the FAA installed Flight Data Input/Output equipment.

Recreation

Time to relax

■ We broke ground for a new \$3 million aquatic center in south Cobb in June. The new indoor swimming facility is located on Six Flags Drive near Interstate 20. The center is scheduled to be open by May 2005 and will feature a 150-foot waterslide, lazy river, interactive water play stations, lap lanes and diving area. This project is funded through a Community Development Block Grant at a cost of approximately \$3 million.

■ Trolley Line Park located in the Vinings area of Cobb County on Log Cabin Road opened in July. Trolley Line Park is a \$180,000 passive park with a walking trail and historical information signs that describe the trolley line that ran between Marietta and Atlanta until the late 1940s. The quarter-mile walking path of brick sidewalk represents the rail system that the trolley ran on. At each end of the track there are scaled down versions of the trolley stop pavilion.



■ The department played host to the Amateur Softball Association's 18 and Under Girls Gold Fast Pitch National Championship in August. The championship was played at Lost Mountain Park with a total of 65 teams participating. Teams came from as far away as the state of Washington with the Southern

Force from Illinois winning the championship game. The tournament generated an estimated \$7 million in economic impact.

■ 2004 was an award-winning year for tennis fans in Cobb County. We competed against other parks and recreation agencies in Georgia and were awarded the Parks and Recreation Department of the Year by the Georgia affiliate of the United States Tennis Association. In addition to this award, Harrison Tennis Center received the Outstanding Facility Award by the United States Tennis Association at the U.S. Tennis Open. Lost Mountain Tennis Center received the Member

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Organization of the Year presented by USTA-Georgia. Harrison Tennis Center received the Junior Tournament of the Year Award for hosting the USTA 16's National Open.

■ Sweetwater and Terrell Mill Tennis Centers had their tennis courts reconstructed while Rhyne Park had two courts reconstructed and two courts resurfaced. Funding for these projects was provided through the lease of cell phone towers in county parks. The cost of these projects totaled \$327,000.

■ In October, we opened the \$650,000 Jean and Elwood Wright Environmental Education Center on 19 acres of greenspace. Cobb County joined in a private-public partnership with the Chattahoochee Nature Center to teach science field study classes. Students will be able to learn about plants and wildlife habitats in an outdoor setting.



■ We finalized a 25-year lease with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to take over approximately 1,450 acres in northwest Cobb County. The land will be a passive park with hiking/walking/horse trails for the

public to enjoy. The department implemented its first-ever wildlife management plan by issuing 300 permits to deer hunters through a lottery style drawing to bow hunt on the property.

■ Playgrounds at 14 parks were replaced at a cost of \$383,000 using money received from cell tower fees.

■ More than 40 acres of additional park property was purchased in west Cobb at a cost of \$480,000. Potential plans are to develop this acreage into a soccer complex. An additional 1,500 acres was purchased in south Cobb at a cost of \$450,000 using greenspace funds.

Water

Naturally providing the future

■ The nation's top three credit rating agencies, Moody's, Standard and Poor's and Fitch IBCA, each gave Cobb County Water System "Triple A" ratings for its revenue bonds for the third year in a row.

■ Residents can now pay their water bill online through the Water System's main Web site, cobbwater.org. At anytime residents have instant access to view their accounts, view or print current and past bills and print out a personalized 12-month consumption history.

■ The \$113 million Chattahoochee Tunnel Project became operational in October following almost 10 years of planning and three years of construction. Completed on time and within budget, this 9.5-mile long, 18-foot diameter tunnel

now serves as the primary wastewater conveyance for most of east Cobb.

■ The \$128 million new, replacement R. L. Sutton Water Reclamation Facility became operational simultaneously with the tunnel. This, along

with the completion during 2005 of expansions of the Noonday and Northwest facilities, will result in a total wastewater treatment capacity of 132 million gallons a day – projected to be sufficient for our needs through 2030.

■ While adhering to an ongoing program of significant investment in maintenance and improvement of its water and wastewater facilities, the Water System furnishes reliable and quality service at among the lowest rates in the regions. The 2004 Rate Survey of the North Georgia Water Planning District reports that a typical monthly bill for 7,000 gallons for our customer is \$47.72.



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Of all the region's comparable water and wastewater utilities, Cobb County Water System's bill is the second lowest.

■ The Cobb County Water System has experienced more than 40 percent customer growth over the past ten years: from 113,558 accounts in 1994 to 159,303 in 2004.

■ The Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association handed us numerous awards in April, including the R. L. Sutton WRF earning recognition as the 2004 Plant of the Year Facility Award (category of advanced treatment greater than 10.1 million gallons per day). All four Cobb plants earned Gold Awards for complete and consistent compliance with all federal and state operating permit requirements.



■ Watershed protection is the best, long-range solution to guarantee quality drinking water. We have demonstrated regional leadership in acquiring

floodplain along major creeks.

Preserving natural greenspace results in buffer areas that can slow or stop the runoff of pollutants across paved properties into local waterways. To date, approximately 400 acres have been purchased or donated for this purpose along Noonday, Nickajack, Powder Springs, Sweetwater and Butler Creeks.

■ Our Board of Commissioners has made other provisions for the protection of the environment this past year. It created two new zoning districts in April in order to keep environmentally sensitive lands, including wetlands and steep slopes, free from development. So far the program has nearly 100 acres under its protection.



Remarks from the County Manager

David Hankerson
County Manager

Many things distinguish Cobb County as a great place to live and work, but my favorite is our employees. Our accomplishments can be traced back to their hard work and proficiency.

We are constantly training our employees to be efficient, customer service-oriented and professional. This reflects in our employees' dealings with the public and elected officials. They enjoy a relationship with county staff that most governments would envy. It sets us apart.

It is a seamless operation. Cobb County has managed to stay frugal, yet still meet the high service standard the public expects from us. The cooperation that exists between our Board of Commissioners and employees made it happen - along with many other accomplishments.

We have used growth in the tax digest and have

managed our expenses to the point where we were able to expand programs, add positions and purchase new properties without having to raise taxes. We used a carefully planned budget surplus for capital improvements, including much needed maintenance of existing facilities.

Many challenges remain in front of us, but what our employees have accomplished so far is more than commendable. I am extremely proud of them, for their professionalism, their integrity and their high ethical standard.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hankerson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.



National & State honors won in 2004 continued...

Harrison Tennis Center, Outstanding USA League Tennis Facility Award - Southern Tennis Association

Lost Mountain Tennis Center, Member Organization of the Year - USTA-Georgia

Lost Mountain Tennis Center teaching professional Jerry Baskin, inductee - Georgia Tennis Hall of Fame

Administrative Specialist II Patricia Vermeer, Distinguished Administrative Support Staff Award
- Georgia Recreation & Parks Association

The Art Place Mountain View, Arts and Humanities Volunteer Award - Georgia Recreation & Parks Association

Water System Maintenance Division, Outstanding Operation of a Water Distribution System
- Georgia Water and Pollution and Control Association

R. L. Sutton Water Reclamation Facility, 2004 Plant of the Year Facility Award
- Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association

R.L. Sutton WRF, Gold Award for complete and consistent compliance with all federal and state operating permit requirements - Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association

Noonday WRF, Gold Award for complete and consistent compliance with all federal and state operating permit requirements - Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association

Northwest WRF, Gold Award for complete and consistent compliance with all federal and state operating permit requirements - Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association

South Cobb WRF, Gold Award for complete and consistent compliance with all federal and state operating permit requirements
- Georgia Water Pollution and Control Association Water System, 2004 WaterFirst Community Program
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Extension Services County Extension Agent Steve Brady, Distinguished Service Award
- Georgia Association of County Agricultural Agents

Senior Services, Best "May is Older Americans Month" program - Georgia Recreation & Parks Association

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Cobb County...Expect the Best!